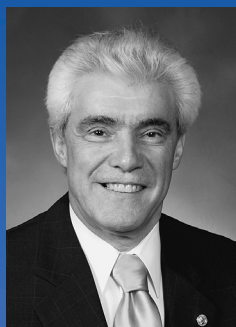


## Report from the 2006 Legislature

To the citizens of the 28th Legislative District from Sen. Mike Carrell and Rep. Gigi Talcott



from the desk of  
Senator

# Mike Carrell

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Dear Friends and Neighbors,

The 60-day legislative session for 2006 has just reached its midpoint as you receive this legislative update.

The big issues this year are, as always, taxes and budgets. Fortunately this year, the majority party has said it is not considering raising taxes again.

Overall, I continue to be optimistic about progress on issues that you care about, including public safety and educating our children.

Twelve years ago, I drafted the "Becca" legislation to help troubled kids. To this date, it has reduced the number of youth being sent into the juvenile prison system by half, and has saved taxpayers over \$200 million.

Now I'm directing my energy into an all-inclusive, multi-year effort to reform our adult prison and parole system.

I welcome your advice, and as always, it is an honor to serve you.

Warmest regards,

  
Mike

*Dear Friends and Neighbors,*

*As I'm headed to Olympia, we're on our way to setting a new record for a string of rainy days. Hopefully the skies have cleared and we're well on the way to finding sound, common-sense solutions to the problems we're facing in state government.*

*It will be a month from now before you can read what I'm writing today – the third day of the Legislature. So, thanks for taking the time to pick up this newsletter. It's a quick look at complex issues.*

*I encourage you to let me know what's important to you through calls, e-mails, free long distance calls, letters, or my favorite – getting together at a "town hall" meeting.*

*In my 14th and final year in the Legislature, I'm especially moved by the profound privilege of being able to serve as your state representative.*

*Gratefully,*

  
Gigi



from the desk of  
Representative

# Gigi Talcott

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Many issues are discussed in greater detail inside this newsletter. Anytime you have a question or advice for us — please call, write or email. Our contact information is provided.

### See what's inside...

- WASL and high school graduation
- Defense of Marriage Act
- State budgets, your tax dollars and the "death tax"
- Protecting our children from sex offenders
- Prison and parole reform
- Republicans' "Commitment to Washington"
- Town hall meeting details
- And more ...



## WASL/waffle

As a life-long teacher, ranking Republican on the House Education Committee and grandmother, I truly believe there is nothing our state government can do that is more important than ensuring every child earns a world-class education. I believe the child's future and the future of our state depend on it.

This year, more and more parents, legislators and lobbyists are awakening to the alarming news that less than half of our high school sophomores can read, write and solve 8th-grade math problems.

The **challenge** remains: How do we ensure students graduate knowing how to **read, write and solve 8th-grade math problems** (yes, that's not a typo — the graduation requirement is 8th-grade worldwide math skills) **without** creating too high of a hurdle that risks even **more students dropping out of school**?

Some support everything about the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL). Others are "waffling" on the issues, proposing we delay it or think of something else — like giving up on state standards and leaving it up to 296 different school districts.

I share their concerns, yet I support a clear course of working with colleagues to get new tools to our students, teachers and parents to help prepare all children for success.

## Here are some of my proposals

Please let me know if you like the idea (yes), or not (no). If you'd like details, please call, e-mail or write me. I'm happy to send specifics.

## Representative Gigi Talcott

Yes No

- ☐ ☐ Earmarking dollars to all school districts focused specifically on helping high school students graduate
- ☐ ☐ Allowing students new to our country to complete their high school diploma in a community college surrounded by students their own age (instead of testing them in a foreign language as the governor proposes)
- ☐ ☐ Accepting other national tests (like the SAT or ACT) as another way to measure math achievement
- ☐ ☐ Providing support for teachers to give diagnostic assessments that are individualized, give immediate results and are cost effective

## Defense of Marriage Act – then and now

In 1997, voters in our neighborhoods and throughout the state defeated Initiative 677 that proposed to legalize same-sex marriages in Washington.

The next year, Mike and I were two of the overwhelming majority of state lawmakers who voted to **define marriage as a legal union between one man and one woman**. This state law is known as DOMA — the Defense of Marriage Act.

Unfortunately, passing a law on something as important as this was challenged in the courts. In 2004, Superior Court judges in King and Thurston counties declared our state marriage law – DOMA – unconstitutional. We've been waiting for a state Supreme Court ruling on the lower court's decision for over a year. It could come at anytime.

While we both believe it's the people's right – not the court's right – to define marriage, we're both very interested in hearing your beliefs on the definition of marriage. Like many issues that come to the Legislature, there's often little chance to gather hundreds or thousands of responses from you — the people we're honored to be able to serve. So, in

advance of the court's ruling, we're hoping you share your view of marriage with us.

Who should determine the definition of marriage in our state?

- ☐ the courts
- ☐ the Legislature
- ☐ the people

If the state Supreme Court rules our current law is unconstitutional, would you support a change to our state constitution giving the people the right to decide the definition of marriage?

Yes No

- ☐ ☐

## Good times, hard choices

Lots and lots of homes sold fast for high prices last year. Our state coffers are overflowing with increased tax collections. That's both **good news — and bad**.

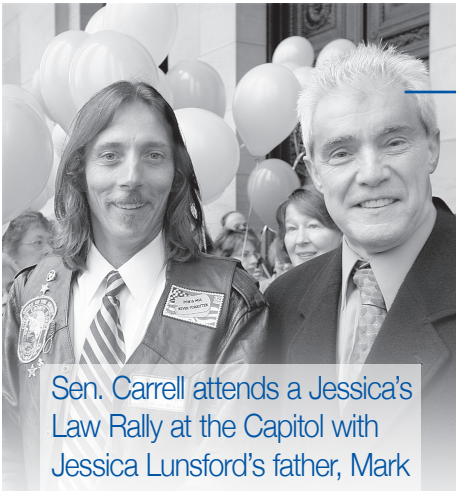
The good news is **no one needs to cut vital services** provided by state government. The bad news is there's great **pressure to spend** that money instead of setting most of it aside for a "rainy day."

In 2004, tax collections were down. The state operating budget (that Mike and I voted against) raised taxes several hundred million dollars, shifted money around, delayed paying bills, and weakened state employee pensions. I don't want to repeat that bad decision.

We support creating a "rainy day fund" that would save tax dollars to protect important services and prevent tax increases the next time the economy has a setback.

What do you recommend we do first with this year's temporary surplus dollars?

- ☐ spend more on state services
- ☐ spend some, save some
- ☐ keep the money in reserve



Sen. Carrell attends a Jessica's Law Rally at the Capitol with Jessica Lunsford's father, Mark

## Senator Mike Carrell

### Prison and parole reform



I am also working with members of the Department of Corrections and local law enforcement to implement prison and parole reform. There are many community, religious, business, and housing groups involved in this two-part reform project, and we all have the same goal – to change the way our state rehabilitates its prisoners, and to keep our families and communities safe.

### Death tax



The third issue is doing away with Washington's estate tax, or the "death tax" as it's been called.

In 1981, voters approved Initiative 402 to abolish the state's inheritance tax. In 2001, the U.S. Congress began phasing out the federal estate tax, but **last session the majority party reinstated the state death tax against the will of the people.** This tax is not just a burden to families; it's a detriment to our economy.

That's why I've introduced Senate Bill 6309 that will do away with the death tax in order to keep small businesses alive and Washington's economy growing.



### Our commitment to you

There are a few specific issues that I want to highlight from our joint Senate and House Commitment to Washington. These are issues I feel are particularly important, and I would like more input from you.

### Protecting children from sex offenders

The second statement on the Commitment is to protect our kids from sex offenders by passing "Jessica's Law Plus." The law is named for Jessica Lunsford, a nine-year-old Florida girl who was abducted, sexually assaulted and murdered on February 23, 2005.

The admitted perpetrator of this horrible crime was a previously convicted sex offender who was in violation of his probation and failed to register his change of address with local law enforcement.

We must pass legislation in Washington that will protect our children from sex offenders. Passing "Jessica's Law Plus" will increase the penalty for some sex crimes against children to a **mandatory 25-year to life sentence followed by a lifetime of electronic monitoring.**

I have introduced Senate Bills 6314 and 6315 to begin implementing these changes.

### We want to hear from you

Gigi and I will be hosting town hall meetings this month, and we'd **greatly appreciate your input** on which issues matter most to you. I look forward to reading your responses.

Do you feel our state's current sex offender laws are tough enough?

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Do you think prison and parole reform is an issue the Legislature should address? How important is community safety to you?

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Knowing the federal government has phased out the estate tax, do you think it is right that Washington should still have one?

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# Town Hall Meetings

**You're Invited!**

**You're invited to bring your questions and concerns to our local town hall meetings.**

If you can take the time to complete this short survey and come help us tally the results, it will help us know more about what's important to you.

Please consider joining us. We'll meet for an hour to discuss what's happening right now. It will be really helpful to hear from you as we navigate our way through the second half of the 2006 legislative session.

**Thursday, February 16**

7:00 to 8:00 p.m.

**Lakewood Library**

6300 Wildaire Road SW  
Lakewood

**Saturday, February 18**

9:30 to 10:30 a.m.

**Bridgeport Place Assisted Living**

5250 Bridgeport Way West #316  
University Place

**Saturday, February 18**

Noon to 1:00 p.m.

**Tacoma Lutheran Home (Chapel)**

1301 North Highlands Parkway  
Tacoma



## Resources on the Internet

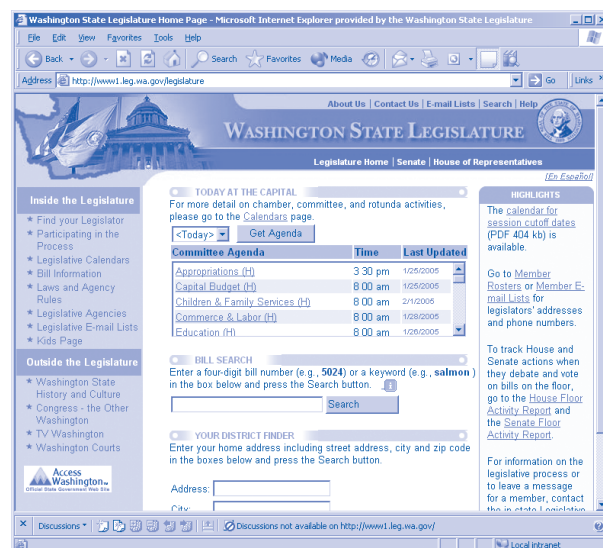
If you need information about state government, you may find the following Internet sites to be great resources. Or, you can always write, call, e-mail, fax, or visit our offices.

**access.wa.gov** – provides access to state agency services, including applying for unemployment benefits, renewing car tabs and much more.

**leg.wa.gov** – offers committee meeting schedules and nearly everything else you'd want to know about the Legislature.

**www1.leg.wa.gov/Senate/SRC/Senators/Carrell.htm** – Sen. Carrell's website.

**hrc.leg.wa.gov/members/talcott.htm** – Rep. Talcott's website.



# Commitment to Washington

This Commitment to Washington is the product of a grassroots, statewide outreach effort from Senate and House Republicans. It offers hope, opportunity and accountability to all Washingtonians.

The Commitment to Washington is a proactive, constructive, common-sense approach to populist ideas and encompasses four major themes: fiscal accountability; child and public safety; jobs and entrepreneurial opportunity; and supporting families.

- Put government on a budget by restoring voter-approved tax and spending limits.
- Protect our kids from sex offenders by passing “Jessica’s Law Plus.”
- Give health care back to patients by allowing affordable, tailored choices that work best for them and their families.
- Get government out of the way of job growth by removing the regulatory burden on small business, repealing the death tax, and reforming unemployment insurance.
- AIM for safer neighborhoods through enhanced penalties for Auto theft, Identify theft and Methamphetamine production.
- Welcome families to our state parks by eliminating the day-use fee.
- Help every student achieve reading, writing and math standards and graduate on time by offering remedial classes, tutors, and expanded summer school programs.
- Help needy families by reducing energy costs.
- Allow citizens and their elected representatives – not the courts – to decide the definition of marriage.
- Protect property rights and prevent government from taking property without compensation.
- Strengthen the family farm by providing tax relief, allowing families to use their land as intended, and ensuring access to water.



Please  
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**State Representative Gigi Talcott**

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## Keeping in Touch

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SRC/Senators/Carrell.htm](http://www1.leg.wa.gov/Senate/SRC/Senators/Carrell.htm)

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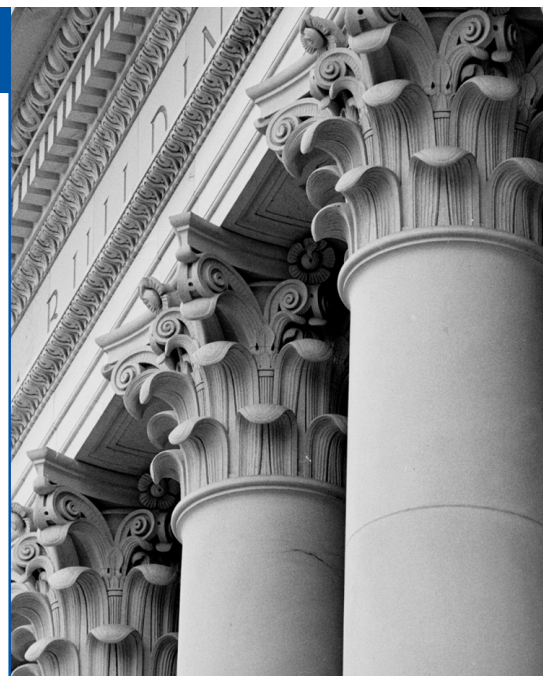
**My legislative homepage:**

[http://hrc.leg.wa.gov/members/  
talcott.htm](http://hrc.leg.wa.gov/members/talcott.htm)

**Toll-free Legislative Hotline:** 1-800-562-6000

**TTY (Hearing-impaired Hotline):** 1-800-635-9993

**Legislative information on the Internet:** [www.leg.wa.gov](http://www.leg.wa.gov)



Representative  
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**Town Hall Meetings**

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